

Epilepsy—Travel

Planning your journey – things to consider

- If travelling solo, tell the driver/conductor/cabin crew that you have epilepsy.
- Before you leave, tell someone where you are going, when you will return and give them a contact name and telephone number.
- Travel with epilepsy ID jewellery and/or epilepsy ID card, emergency contact number.
- Take sufficient medication to last the length of your trip, plus extra doses in case of gastric upsets.
- If you are going to be travelling across time zones, discuss your medication with your GP or epilepsy specialist/epilepsy specialist nurse in advance of your journey.
- To ensure you don't miss doses of medication, or take them at longer intervals than recommended, have a watch and a mobile phone with you to help with timing doses.

Concessionary Travel Card

See our leaflet on Concessionary Travel for details on eligibility and how to apply for the National Entitlement Card. Alternatively, contact your local authority Travel Concession Unit for further information or an application form (contact numbers are contained in our leaflet).

Concessionary Rail Travel

A disabled person's rail card reduces the cost of fares on all rail routes and on some boats and ferries. Further information and application forms can be obtained at staffed main line stations.

Travelling by Air

Take all of your medication in your hand luggage in case your checked-in luggage is delayed or lost and also carry a copy of your prescription.

Check airline and airport security rules before you travel. You are allowed to carry solid medicines (tablets, capsules) in your hand luggage. You may also carry liquid medicines (syrups) in bottles of up to 100ml. If you need to carry more than 100ml of liquid medicine to ensure you have enough for the flight you must get permission in advance from the airline and the airport. All medicines, along with any toiletries, should be in a clear, sealed plastic bag before you go through security checks.

Early flights and long haul travel can lead to sleep deprivation, which may be a seizure trigger for some people.

Air travel in particular can cause dehydration. Alcohol can also lead to dehydration, so it may be best avoided. Make sure you drink plenty of water.

Medication

Your GP is only allowed to give you a prescription for enough medication to last you up to 3 months. Contact your GP if you are going to need more than a 3 month supply of your medication.

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC)

The European Health Insurance Card (EHIC) allows travellers to any country within the European Economic Area to receive reduced-cost or free urgent medical treatment in the event of illness or accident. The EHIC is free to UK residents. Call 0845 606 2030 or apply online at www.show.scotland.nhs.uk. Remember that the EHIC is not a substitute for travel insurance.

Travel Insurance

You are strongly advised to buy travel insurance, but you should shop around. You must provide full information about your epilepsy and any other pre-existing medical conditions and treatment, as failure to do so will invalidate cover. Contact Epilepsy Connections for information on companies providing insurance.

Vaccinations and immunisations

Ensure that any vaccinations, immunisations or preventive medications have time to take effect before you leave. Consult your GP or pharmacist, or visit the Medical Advisory Service for Travellers Abroad at www.masta.org

NHS Scotland's website www.fitfortravel.nhs.uk provides travel health information for people travelling outside the UK.

Malaria

All travellers to areas where there is a risk of malaria must take precautions. This is particularly important for those people with epilepsy or a history of epilepsy. A number of prescription-only and over-the-counter anti-malarial drugs are not suitable for people with epilepsy as they can cause seizures. Seek your GP's advice.

As anti-malarial drugs are not 100% effective, additional precautions should be taken to avoid mosquito bites:

- wear long-sleeved clothing and trousers
- use insect repellents on exposed skin
- sleep under a mosquito net.

Travel and holiday advice for people with disabilities

Many organisations have or can provide information on transport if you are disabled and holiday schemes supporting people with disabilities and medical conditions:

Contact a Family Tel: 0808.808.3555 E-mail: helpline@cafamily.org.uk

Door to Door Web: www.gov.uk/transport-disabled

Fabb Scotland Tel: 0131.475.2313 Web: www.fabb.org.uk

Royal Association for Disability and Rehabilitation (RADAR)

Tel: 020.7250.3222 E-Mail: radar@radar.org.uk

Tourism For All UK

Tel: 0845.124.9971 E-mail: info@tourismforall.org.uk

Traveline

Tel: 0871.200.22.33 Web: www.traveline.info

Disability Now

www.disabilitynow.org.uk

Vitalise

www.vitalise.org.uk

To find out about epilepsy organisations worldwide, contact the: International Bureau for Epilepsy. E-mail: ibedublin@eircom.net

This is one of a series of information leaflets available to download from our website for personal use only, subject to the Terms and Conditions for use of our site, which are shown on our Home Page.



Supporting people with epilepsy

Head Office

100 Wellington Street
Glasgow G2 6DH
tel: 0141.248.4125
fax: 0141.248.5887

Forth Valley Fieldwork Service

Administration Offices
Falkirk Community Hospital
Westburn Avenue
Falkirk FK1 5QE
tel: 01324 673750

Email: info@epilepsyconnections.org.uk
Website: www.epilepsyconnections.org.uk